

FAITH IN OLD AGE
Follow Christ
Klenovec, 10th June 2023

¹ וְזָכַר אֶת-בּוֹרְאֵיךָ בְּיָמֶיךָ בַּחֹרְתֶיךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר
לֹא-יָבֹאוּ יָמֵי הָרָעָה וְהִגִּיעוּ שָׁנִים אֲשֶׁר
הָאָמֵר אֵינֹלִי בָהֶם חֶפְזִן
² עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תִחַשֵׁף הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וְהָאוֹר
וְהַיָּרֵחַ וְהַכּוֹכָבִים וְשָׁבוּ הָעָבִים אַחַר הַגֶּשֶׁם
³ בַּיּוֹם שִׁזְעוּ שְׁמֵרֵי הַבַּיִת וְהַתְּעוּתוֹ
אֲנָשֵׁי הַחַיִל וּבָטְלוּ הַטַּחְנוֹת כִּי מֵעַטּוֹ וְהִשְׁכּוּ
הָרְאוֹת בְּאֲרְבוֹת
⁴ וְסָגְרוּ דַלְתוֹת בְּשׁוֹק בְּשֹׁפֵל קוֹל הַטַּחְנָה
וַיִּקְוֶם לְקוֹל הַצִּפּוֹר וַיִּשְׁחַו כָּל-בְּנוֹת הַשִּׁיר
⁵ גַּם מִנְבֵּה יִרְאוּ וְחַתְחָתִים בְּדַרְךְ
וַיִּנְאֵץ הַשָּׁקֵד וַיִּסְתַּבֵּל הַחֲנָב וְחִפְרֵי הָאֲבִיזָה
כִּי-הִלֵּךְ הָאָדָם אֶל-בַּיִת עוֹלָמוֹ וְסָבְבוּ
בְּשׁוֹק הַסְּפָדִים
⁶ עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִנְרַתֵּק חֶבֶל הַכֶּסֶף
וְתָרַץ גִּלְתֵּי הַזָּהָב וְתִשְׁבַּר כַּד עַל-הַמְּבוּעַ
וְנָרַץ הַגִּלְגָּל אֶל-הַבּוֹר
⁷ וַיָּשָׁב הָעָפָר עַל-הָאָרֶץ כְּשֶׁהָיָה
וְהָרוּחַ תָּשׁוּב אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר נָתַנָּה

Ecclesiastes 12:1-7 Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them"; ² before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain, ³ in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed, ⁴ and the doors on the street are shut- when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low- ⁵ they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets- ⁶ before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, ⁷ and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

Psalm 90

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0. INTRODUCTION

0.1. OLD AGE IN LITERATURE

- Ecc 12:1-7 → old age – or end of the world?
- [LUVENALIS] “Orandum est, ut sit mens sana in corpore sano.”
- [Benjamin FRANKLIN] All would live long, but none would be old.

0.2. SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

- today → growing old is to be avoided, fought, denied, and disguised...
- “AGEISM” ~ *racism* → looking down on old people

0.3. AGING – WHAT IS IT?

- dimensions (physical, cognitive, psychological → spiritual)
- spheres (family, work, education, leisure → church, Bible knowledge, faith)
- directions (decline *and* growth)

0.4. BIBLICAL ATTITUDES

- [RAPPARD Dora] *Frohes Alter* (1923)
- **Job 12:12** Wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in length of days
- **Lev 19:32** "You shall stand up before the gray head (מִפְּנֵי שֵׂיבָה תִּקּוּם) and honor the face of an old man, (וְהִרְרַת פְּנֵי זָקֵן) and you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.
- **Pro 16:31** Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life.
- **Pro 20:29** The glory of young men is their strength, but the splendor of old men is their gray hair.
- **Mal 4:6** And he (Elijah) will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers... (*The TRAINING IN FORGIVENESS*)

1. PROBLEMS

1.1. BIBLICAL WARNINGS

- Abraham
 - **Gen 25:1** Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. → Midian... (They joined Moab in desiring Balaam to curse Israel, and then in tempting Israel at Shittim to whoredom and idolatry with Baal Peor.)
 - **Jdg 6:1** The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD gave them into the hand of Midian seven years.
- Isaac
 - **Gen 25:28** Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob ...
 - **Genesis 27:1-4** When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son"; and he answered, "Here I am." ² He said, "Behold, I am old; I do not know the day of my death." ³ Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me, ⁴ and prepare for me delicious food, such as I love, and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die
- Jacob
 - **Gen 47:8-10** And Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How many are the days of the years of your life?" ⁹And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my sojourning are 130 years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojourning." ¹⁰ And Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from the presence of Pharaoh.
- King David

- **1Ki 1:5-6** Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king." And he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. ⁶ His father had never at any time displeased him by asking, "Why have you done thus and so?"
- King Uzziah
 - Uzziah was suddenly struck with leprosy before he had offered the incense (2Chr 26:19), and he was driven from the Temple and compelled to reside in "a separate house" until his death (2Ki 15:5, 27; 2Chr 26:3).
- King Asa
 - 2Chr 16:12 In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was diseased in his feet, and his disease became severe. Yet even in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but sought help from physicians.
- King Joash
 - **2Chr 24:1-4** Joash was seven years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba. ² And Joash did what was right in the eyes of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest. ³ Jehoiada got for him two wives, and he had sons and daughters. ⁴ After this Joash decided to restore the house of the LORD.
 - **2Chr 24:22** Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness that Jehoiada, Zechariah's father, had shown him, but killed his son.

1.2. OLD AGE ISSUES

1.2.1. PHYSICAL

- food-addiction (→ Isaac?)
- disease (→ Asa); desperate measures?

1.2.2. MENTAL

- self-aggrandisement (→ Uzziah)

1.2.3. SOCIAL

- postponement of settlement (David) → Adonijah
 - **2 Kings 20:1** In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, Set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover.
- family inheritance...
- leadership positions...

1.2.4. SPIRITUAL

- unbelief (→ king Asa)
- spiritual error (Isaac)
- loss of spiritual support ("crutches"?) from the outside... (Joash)

1.3. ECC 12:1-7

- First, he likens growing old and death to an oncoming storm (12:1-2 → Mt 7), then he evokes the picture of an old and decaying house (12:3-5 → Mk 3:27 "strong man"), and finally he refers to the destruction of precious objects (12:6-7 → 2Cor 4?).

2. PROMISES

2.1. THE HELP FROM GOD

- **Isa 46:4** "And I will still be carrying you (אֲנִי אֶסְבֵּל) when you are old. Your hair will turn gray, and I will still carry you. I made you, and I will carry you to safety."

2.2. STRENGTH

- **Isa 40:30-31** Even **youths** shall faint and be weary, and **young men** shall fall exhausted; ³¹ but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.
- [Caleb] **Jos 14:10-11** I am this day eighty-five years old. ¹¹ I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me; my strength now is as my strength was then, for war and for going and coming. (→ training?)

2.3. FRUITFULNESS

- **Psalm 92:12-15** The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. ¹³ They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God. ¹⁴ They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, ¹⁵ to declare that the LORD is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

3. PRAYERS

3.1. PREPARING FOR OLD AGE ("SABBATH YEARS")

- Learning: **Isa 58:13-14** "If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it, not going (1) your own ways, (מַעֲשֵׂוֹת דְרָכֶיךָ) or seeking (2) your own pleasure, (חֲפִצְדָּךְ מִמְּצוֹא) or (3) talking idly; (וְדַבַּר דָּבָר) ¹⁴ then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." → program of development (plans; hobbies; talks)

3.2. VALUING TIME

- **Ps 90:12** So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. (use of time for *thinking and meditation*)

3.3. PRAYER FOR DEEPER RELATIONSHIP

- Faithfulness of God ()
 - **Ps 71:9** Do not cast me off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength is spent.
 - **Ps 71:18** So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come.
- Delight in prayer (genuine inward spirituality)
 - **Gal 4:6** And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (Anna ... **Luke 2:37** ...worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day).
[OWEN *The Holy Spirit in Prayer*] But this delight in God as the object of prayer hath a peculiar consideration in this matter; for without it ordinarily the duty is not accepted with God, and is a barren, burdensome task unto them by whom it is performed.

3.4. ETERNAL HOPE

- **2Cor 5:1** For we know that if the tent, which is our earthly home, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

4. TO REMEMBER

- Old age is a time of both danger and opportunity.
- There are promises of God we can claim.
- Pray and prepare for your old age while you can.